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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 3 December 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. FLORES BERMUDEZ (Vice-President)	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. de MARCO (President)	(Malta)

- Question of Palestine [23] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

  (c) Draft resolutions

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 23 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/45/35)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/709)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/45/L.24 to A/45/L.28).

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): Here we are again in this international forum to debate the question of Palestine. We have every right to wonder, is this the twentieth time, the fortieth time, the umpteenth time, or will this be the last time we debate this question? This question of Palestine will remain in abeyance, unsolved. But why? To find an answer, we have to focus on the most important reasons which have prevented us from finding a just solution to the question although the road to such solution is clear enough and was defined by the international community many years ago.

In defining the solution, the international community adopted hundreds of resolutions. The General Assembly alone has adopted 400 resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Middle East with the aim of formulating a solution that would lead to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination and the right to establish its independent State with Holy Al-Quds as its capital, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian people's sole, legitimate representative.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

We have the right to wonder indeed. We have the right to wonder why the questions of Palestine, the Middle East and Lebanon have remained unsolved and the 166 Security Council resolutions on those questions have remained unimplemented? We have the right to wonder how much longer will Israel continue to occupy Arab land? How much longer will it continue to declare arrogantly that they are part of the land of Israel? How much longer will it continue to call the West Bank "Judea" and "Samaria", and continue to claim that Al-Quds is its eternal capital? How much longer will the racist Zionist forces of occupation continue to perpetrate crimes against the Palestinian people? How much longer will this struggling people be deprived of its legitimate human rights?

The principal obstacle that has prevented and continues to prevent the implementation of Security Council resolutions, particularly those which call for enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights is the refusal by the United States of America and Israel to concede to the Palestinian people, of all the peoples of the world, the right to self-determination.

At a time when the whole world condemns, as it has done for decades, the Zionist aggression against the Arab nation and the Palestinian people in particular, Zionist terrorism, under the leadership of the veteran terrorist Shamir and his terror gang, continues unabated. Why should that be? Here every accusing finger points clearly and firmly at the United States of America as the partisan major Power which openly stands against the Arab nation and its legitimate rights, takes the side of the Zionist entity and provides it with every type of political, economic, moral and military support. That great Power, through its partisan stand, makes it correct to state that the suffering of the Palestinian people, the denial of its rights, are caused by its brutal misguided policy, which is an international crime against his civilization and the moral values.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

The United States of America has used the right of veto 81 times to prevent the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions, which, in the majority of cases, dealt with the rights of the Palestinian people and condemned Israeli acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and neighbouring Arab States. This year alone, the United States has used its right of veto seven times to block draft resolutions on the question of Palestine. Undoubtedly, one of the most immoral positions the United States has taken is its effective participation in supporting the Zionist forces of occupation in carrying out its inhuman task of suppressing the most magnificent popular uprising in the history of mankind: the intifadah of the Palestinian people against Zionist occupation.

This valiant intifadah, which has all the elements of legitimate national resistance against occupation and which has given the most brilliant examples of love of homeland, love of freedom, justice and peace, an intifadah which has personified the most noble values of man in the aspiration to enjoy human rights, the intifadah which has found its place in the conscience and hearts of the peoples of the world, has found only plots, terrorism and brutality at the hands of the Zionist forces of occupation with the support of an American policy which contradicts all the values of civilization, human principles and morality.

At this point we must refer to the stance of another State, a permanent member in the Security Council, namely Great Britain. This is a State which bears a grave historic responsibility for the many injustices, inflicted on the Palestinian people and is responsibile for many of the problems in the region. Britain was the major colonial Power that dominated the region for a long time. To date, it has not shown any desire to rid itself of its colonial past and has failed to apologize for the crimes it perpetrated against the peoples of the world. It has not lost its appetite for influence, and continues to take a partisan stand that is hostile

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

to the Arab people on the question of Palestine and other issues in the region. It is a position of hatred, that does not serve the cause of security, stability and justice.

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(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

All the crimes perpetrated by the racist Zionist entity against the Palestinian people are naturally aimed at one principal objective, namely the liquidation of the Palestinian cause and the entrenchment of the Zionist presence in the region. That presence has been armed with superior conventional and nuclear weapons and supported by the United States of America and its allies. Its objective is to impose its expansionist and hegemonistic policies on the region. On the other hand, the racist Israeli régime collaborates with the racist South African régime in both the nuclear and strategic fields with the aim of perpetuating the subjugation and persecution of the Palestinian people and the people of South Africa.

There is no doubt that one of the most outstanding stages in the implementation of this scheme is the imperialist Zionist plot to settle hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and the States of Eastern Europe in the occupied territories. This new wave of settlement is taking place at the expense of the Arab Palestinian people. For that very reason, the acts of oppression and killing are being escalated with increasing ferocity against the people of the occupied territories. The aim is to expel them from their land and replace them with the new immigrants. This is another step towards the creation of the so-called "Greater Israel".

Only a few days ago, while commemorating fellow terrorists of the Likud bloc, the terrorist Shamir said that the previous leaders of the movement have left a clear message for the need to keep the land of Israel which extends from the sea to the Jordan river for future generations in order to absorb the collective immigration of Soviet Jews and for the Jewish people in general.

The term "Land of Israel", in the thinking of the terrorist Shamir, includes the West Bank and Gaza in addition to Al-Quds, the Golan Heights together with all the territory occupied before 1967.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

According to reports, the Soviet Jews who have reached the occupied territories so far number approximately 150,000 and are expected to number one million immigrants by 1992.

The States that sponsor this campaign, with the United States of America at their forefront, under the pretext of defending human rights and the right to emigrate, refuse at the same time to concede to the Palestinian people the right to exercise those same human rights, including the right of return to its homeland, regardless of the many United Nations resolutions reaffirming that right of return, which have remained unenforced since 1948.

Today, the Zionist immigration plot continues at the expense of that Palestinian right and involves the expulsion of the remainder of the Palestinian people from the occupied territories.

Iraq, which, from the very beginning, stood steadfastly in the face of this imperialist Zionist plot and has unmasked it, has created a deterrent Arab force that is capable of achieving a measure of balance to deter Zionist terrorists and halt those expansionist aggressive policies that are being carried out at the expense of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation. That nationalist posture, which supports the search of a just peace and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, has made Iraq a principal target of the Zionist American plot.

For that reason, necessary plans had to be made to silence Iraq by weakening its economy and then to strip it of its defensive military capability, so that the Zionist entity may be able to pursue undeterred and unopposed its expansionist aggressive policies. There is nothing new in all this. The Arab nation for many decades, particularly since the middle of this century, has witnessed the intensification of the plotting against any Arab power that tried to confront the Zionist entity and face up to its schemes.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

The United States has taken advantage of the disequilibrium in the international arena following the changes in Eastern Europe to put in place its scheme and achieve the other objective of controlling the oil resources of the region in order for the United States to be able to dominate the world economy and particularly the economies of the third world.

From this viewpoint, we can perceive the organic link between the so-called Gulf crisis, which was caused by the plotting against Iraq in the interests of Israel, and the Palestinian cause. Targeting Iraq is nothing new. The Zionist aggression against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, which was built for peaceful purposes, was one of the most significant aspects of the plotting against Iraq. Many other attempts have been made by the organizers of the Zionist American plot to besiege Iraq and to weaken it, with a view to obliterating it. Suffice to recall in this respect the many efforts by the United States and Israel to protract the Iran-Iraq war for eight long years. They expected to weaken Iraq. They wanted an isolationist Iraq after that protracted war. Thereafter, there was the economic plot against Iraq through the lowering of oil prices.

The leaders of the obsolescent Kuwaiti régime and its friends were the main tool in this economic warfare that was waged on Iraq, and when Iraq aborted that plot the United States, Israel and their allies overtly prepared for aggression against Iraq and the Arab Nation. Thus the invading American forces came to occupy the holy lands in the Arab peninsula as an extension of the Zionist occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands in Syria and Lebanon.

Those elements of the plot which targeted the economy of Iraq, its great development enterprise, and its determination to redress the armaments imbalance between the Arabs and the usurper entity in occupied Palestine, were the preamble

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

to the aggression against Iraq. This is borne out by the fact that the moves against Iraq before 2 August 1990, were not in any way unrelated to Iraq's position on the question of Palestine or to its stand on the plot of settling new immigrants in the occupied territories.

The massive American military build up and the objectives of the intended aggression against Iraq clearly demonstrate the deep link between what is taking place in the Arab Gulf and the liberation of Palestine. Indeed, it is necessary to focus on the political stance on the Palestinian cause of those who amassed their forces to the Arab peninsula and the Gulf. We must expose the gaping difference between their pious claims that they are only defending international legality and the new world order, on the one hand, and their impious silence on the other hand, indeed, their support for crimes of the Zionist entity and the extreme care they take not to hurt its feelings even with a word or two of condemnation.

The series of events in our region leads us to see in its true light the negative position adopted by the American administration on the peaceful Iraqi initiative on 12 August 1990. That position bespoke the resolve of the American administration and its puppets in the region to insulate the Zionist entity from any fair trial. When the American administration and its puppets declare that what is required now is to focus on the so-called Gulf crisis and to leave the other issues in the Middle East till later, they only underline their plotting against the Palestinian cause, their zeal to insulate the Zionist entity from accountability and their determination to perpetuate its occupation, expansion and colonialist settlement.

How else can we explain the position of those parties on the question of Palestine for half a century? What is their position on the crimes of the Zionist occupiers? Why did they try to cover up the massacre in the Al-Aqsa Mosque where

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

Zionist terrorists killed 21 Palestinians? Why did both the American and British delegations make so many efforts in the Security Council to prevent the adoption of a resolution that would condemn those murders? Why was there such a silence on the refusal of the Tel Aviv Government to accept an international committee to investigate the crimes at the Al-Aqsa Mosque? Why does the American delegation overtly work so hard to prevent the Security Council and the United Nations from playing any role whatsoever on the question of Palestine?

All the facts on the ground, all the events witnessed by the world in our region, underline the interlinkage between the so-called Gulf crisis and the question of Palestine. They reaffirm that the only solution is the Iraqi initiative which has been on the table since 12 August. The world today faces a moral testing-ground, which is our region, and the first question is that of Palestine.

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

In order for our world and its institutions to prove that they will not fail this moral test, they must act on the basis that Palestine comes first, second and last.

A radical solution to the question of Palestine, which would guarantee the ending of Zionist occupation and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, foremost of which are its right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State, with Al-Quds al-Shareef as its capital, is the only way in which to solve all the crises of the region and open the road for the peoples of the region to peace, security and prosperity.

Mr. SOMVORACHIT (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): The situation in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied by Israel since 1967 continues to worsen alarmingly every day. On 8 October this year the world once again witnessed savage repression of the unarmed Palestinian population of Jerusalem by the Israeli occupation forces. The deliberate attack on the forecourt of the Temple Mount Holy Mosque caused at least 18 deaths and more than 150 injuries among Palestinian civilians, including innocent people who had gone there to pray.

Then on 18 October Israeli soldiers once again launched a campaign of savage repression against Palestinians living in Gaza, in the course of which 31 Palestinians suffered bullet wounds, 52 were injured by tear-gas grenades and 36 others were beaten. On the same day a 65-year-old Palestinian woman was beaten to death by Israeli soldiers in Nablus. The next day, 19 October, Israeli forces, using live bullets and rubber bullets, wounded 40 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

According to well-informed sources, since the intifadah began more than 1,300 unarmed Palestinians, about a quarter of them children, have been killed, and

(Mr. Somvorachit, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

more than 97,000 have been injured. A total of 1,890 Palestinian women have suffered miscarriages after inhaling tear-gas used by the Israeli army.

Harsh collective punishments are still being frequently imposed. Between December 1987 and the end of August 1990, 10,200 Palestinians were placed in administrative detention, for as long as six months in some cases, without trial or conviction. A curfew has been imposed everywhere for 1,755 days, and 1,557 houses and other buildings have been demolished or sealed up. In 1988 and 1989 8,000 hectares of land were confiscated.

The increased repression and massacre of the defenceless civilian Palestinian population of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967 by Israel, the occupying Power, makes the matter of internationally guaranteeing the security and protection of the Palestinian population increasingly urgent. That is why the Security Council met and on 12 October adopted resolution 672 (1990) condemning the acts of violence, which had resulted in injuries and loss of human life and calling on Israel to abide scrupulously by its obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, which is applicable in this case and to which Israel is a party.

Unfortunately, as is well known, Israel once again showed its total contempt for the international community and its arrogance by rejecting that resolution 672 (1990) outright and refusing point blank to receive the mission of inquiry that the Secretary-General was to send. This prompted the Security Council to meet again on 24 October, when it adopted another resolution, resolution 673 (1990), reaffirming resolution 672 (1990) and calling on Israel to reconsider its decision. But resolution 673 (1990) met the same fate as resolution 672 (1990).

All previous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly on the question of Palestine and the Middle East have remained a dead letter.

(Mr. Somvorachit, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

Israel's systematic rejection of all United Nations resolutions, the measures it has taken and the policies and practices it has pursued in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and with respect to the Palestinian population confirm that country's territorial ambitions and expansionist aims, in defiance of the provisions of the Charter and international law. Whether we like it or not, the state of insecurity and violence prevailing in the occupied territories as a result of the Israeli repression is the negation of peace and therefore of progress. Israel, however, has extended its aggressive activities and occupation into southern Lebanon, which it has bombed at least 17 times since the beginning of this year.

At a time of détente in international relations following the end of the cold war, and when profound changes are taking place in the world, changes so great that many are already speaking of a new world order based on the rule of law and respect for international legality, Israel should have seized this rare opportunity to start the peace process in the Middle East, for which the whole world has been yearning for more than four decades, especially since the Palestinians have made important political changes with respect to the State of Israel - the cessation of all hostilities and acceptance of the principle of two States, based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Iralienable Rights of the Palestinian People, unswervingly and unreservedly supports the legitimate, heroic struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole, authentic representative, to recover all its fundamental national rights,

(Mr. Somvorachit, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

including the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine.

My delegation fully shares the widely held opinion that solving the Middle East problem, the core of which is the Palestine question, requires the prompt convening of the International Peace Conference, under United Nations auspices, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people, and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The determination the Palestinians have shown to perservere with their intifadah clearly demonstrates that they reject occupation and are resolved to exercise their legitimate, fundamental political rights. My delegation therefore once again makes the appeal we customarily make to all the parties concerned, including the country that could exert a favourable influence on Israel, to redouble their efforts to achieve our common objective: peace, which is so essential to all the peoples of the region, and particularly the Palestinian people, whose suffering has already lasted too long.

Mr. OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): I shall not take much of your time, Sir, since the delegation of my country supports the intervention by the Algerian delegation which will be speaking on behalf of the Arab Maghreb Union. Notwithstanding the repeated condemnations made by the international community and its appeals to Israel especially in the resolutions of the Assembly and the Security Council, the Israeli authorities continue to reject such resolutions one right after the other. Those authorities also persist in their aggression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, and thus trample under foot all international covenants and rights.

The intifadah of the heroic Palestinian people which erupted in December 1987 and the declaration of the State of Palestine that followed that intifadah are further proofs of the ability of that people to mobilize and of its determination to regain its inalienable national rights. What we have witnessed lately, even during this last weekend, yesterday and the day before, namely the killings and acts of desecration perpetrated in the Holy Land by the Israeli authorities are unforgivable manifestations of Israel's contempt for all human values, its defiance of the international community and the United Nations Charter and its systematic violation of human rights.

The Assembly is called upon to seek a just, comprehensive and durable solution to the question of the Palestinian people and of the Middle East through the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties, especially the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in order to find a solution that would be based on the principles contained in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 1988.

The Palestine Liberation Organization has made earnest and sincere efforts to create real opportunities for peace without getting any effective response. Israel

(Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, Mauritania)

has become even more intransigent in its rejection of every overture and it has become more adamant in its insistence on its illegitimate ambitions. It has continued to build settlements one after the other and we still hear repeated statements by Israeli leaders about the need to establish "Greater Israel" in order to absorb Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and all parts of the world. The aim, of course, is to change the demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territories.

This Israeli intransigence puts regional and world peace in grave jeopardy. That is why we must work unremittingly to open the door for a dialogue in order to reach a solution to this conflict, namely, to make real efforts to convene an international peace conference.

Since everything must come to an end and since the situation of the Palestinians after 40 years has become so intolerable and, indeed, one of the worst situations of any people anywhere, especially regarding the displacement of families, it is high time for the international community, represented in the United Nations, to take effective measures to undo the injustice which has been done to this martyred people. All forms of international co-operation which aim at political and economic stability must be based on the settlement of the world's major problems. One of the most significant of those problems is the problem of the Middle East whose core is the question of Palestine.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his two valuable reports, namely, S/21919 to the Security Council and A/45/709 to the General Assembly at this session. From the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, I should like to quote one very significant question which cannot be left unanswered by the international community:

(Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, Mauritania)

"The issue before us today is what practical steps can, in fact, be taken by the international community to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation." (S/21919, para. 24)

Mauritania which has always seized every opportunity to reiterate its full commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, earnestly hopes that the General Assembly will not leave unprotected the Palestinian people who have suffered and continue to suffer the consequences of the worst colonialist conspiracy of the century. It is high time to undo the injustice that has been done and put an end to the Israeli occupation.

Mr. ORDONEZ (Philippines): The Philippines shares the distress of the international community over the lack of progress in the search for a peaceful solution of the Palestinian question.

The dramatic political developments at the end of 1988 led many of us to believe, quite justifiably, that valuable momentum had been achieved and a negotiated settlement was getting close. Today, nothing but an increasingly more vicious cycle of violence and suffering, and its concomitant hardening of already inflexible positions, hovers over us, and there is a chilling lack of a diplomatic vehicle on the issue. No table around which negotiations could proceed has yet been laid. There is just this sobering, nay humiliating, impasse.

(Mr. Ordonez, Philippines)

For a problem that has festered for so long, for a people that has endured so much affliction and whose rights have been so callously denied, for a region that is recognized by many to be the most explosive in the world, this void, this abject lack of an active diplomatic mechanism in play is simply intolerable.

One could not be considered petulant if one juxtaposed this glaring void against the much-heralded "new world order". To use your fine words, Mr. President:

> "At a time when the world is moving so dramatically from confrontation to co-operation ... how is this new spirit of co-operation ... going to apply [in the case of the Palestinian people]? How are the new high moral standards in international affairs going to be translated into effective action to redress the injustices to which the Palestinians have been subjected for so long?" (A/AC.183/PV.174, pp. 11 and 12)

The Palestinians certainly want to know. They - whose many tribulations have been matched only by their perseverance and indomitable spirit - look to us in the United Nations, in this Assembly, to provide the answer. And they - who continue to hope that someday they will regain their birthright and be with us as equal partners in the comity of nations - deserve one.

One may also not be needlessly fretful if one wonders aloud at the speed with which the international consensus has been mustered and action taken in the face of aggression in a neighbouring region - a speed yet to be seen in the case of Palestine. Yet, we agree with you, Mr. President, that:

> "It will be a gross injustice to the long-suffering people of Palestine for any formal linkages to be established, either in the positive or the negative sense, between their problem and the crisis in the Gulf. The two problems are

(Mr. Ordonez, Philippines)

unrelated in either historical or political terms. However, we should not ignore the reality that they arouse analogous sentiments with regard to the denial of the right to sovereignty of nations and the self-determination of peoples." (ibid, p. 16)

The urgency with which the new world order should be brought to bear on the Palestinian question cannot be overemphasized in the light of the worsening situation in the occupied territories. Each day that the intifadah is prolonged, there will be pain among Palestinians and Israelis alike. And this pain will in time produce enough bitterness to snuff out whatever willingness to negotiate remains on both sides.

My delegation believes that the one sure sign that the new world order vis-à-vis the Palestinian question is upon us will be when the unprecedented majority that supported resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989 is finally heard and preparations for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, get under way.

Such a conference would seek a settlement based on the following principles: withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab lands occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; acknowledgment of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries of all States in the region, including the States of Palestine and Israel; resolution of the problem of Palestinian refugees; dismantling the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories; and guaranteeing freedom of access to the holy places.

With the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the conference would provide for direct negotiations between

(Mr. Ordonez, Philippines)

the parties concerned. And those direct negotiations, that dialogue - not the use or threat of use of force - is the spirit of the new world order.

But until the day when this new order dawns and touches the lives of every Palestinian and every Israeli, we call upon Israel to heed the repeated calls of the international community for it to respect and abide by the terms of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Israel's own distress over its diaspora cannot but engender a recognition and understanding of the anguish and afflictions of the other diaspora visited upon the Palestinians. Israel's own longing for a secure, sovereign and prosperous homeland cannot but engender a recognition and understanding of the Palestinians' longing to be able to chart their own destiny on their own soil.

We have been distressed to learn that one out of every four Palestinians killed during the last three years of the intifadah was a youth no older than 16. We have been appalled to read the chilling tales about schoolchildren going berserk at the slightest commotion because of fear. We have been painfully reminded of past similar events in our own country by the reports of involuntary disappearances during the dark hours of the night. Indeed, my delegation prays that the Hobbesian characterization of life as "short, nasty and brutish" will not find eternal validation in the lives of Palestinians.

Just as the wall in Berlin crumbled and as bridges of unity and peace are abuilding in Cambodia and elsewhere, we hope that the wall of distrust and hatred that has grown taller over the years in Palestine will soon show cracks from even the lightest touches of restraint and compromise. And may this begin here and now.

Mr. ASHEEKE (Namibia): The General Assembly is once again seized of the question of Palestine. My delegation feels duty-bound to make a contribution to this debate which, we hope, will be a further step towards the realization of the

(Mr. Asheeke, Namibia)

full exercise by the fraternal people of Palestine of its inalienable right to self-determination and national independence.

The Assembly has before it the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in which this body is reminded of the continuing plight of the Palestinians. Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to the Committee for its dedicated service, under the dynamic leadership of Ambassador Diallo of the Republic of Senegal. Equally, we wish the Secretary-General well with regards to his untiring efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question, under the auspices of the United Nations. He deserves all our support in this difficult task.

The people of Namibia have a special feeling for, and bonds of solidarity with, the people of Palestine. Together we have shared common aspirations for a better future for our peoples. We have travelled a common road in the search for freedom and dignity. Yes, we have fought against foreign domination, racism and oppression hand-in-hand.

We have often been unhappy partners in experiencing the brutalities, humiliation, agony and at times seeming despair of our beloved compatriots: children, women, men, old and young. However, we never gave up the struggle because the cause of justice is too sacred and worth every sacrifice.

Together - every passing year, month, week, day and, indeed, every single moment - we wondered when our people would join the community of free and independent nations. Until recently we were neighbours in this very chamber and in numerous conference rooms at the United Nations and elsewhere, pleading the case of our two peoples.

Today, Namibia is an independent and sovereign State, thanks to the perseverance and determination of our people and the vital support of the

(Mr. Asheeke, Namibia)

international community. We were proud to have extended our long-standing friendship and solidarity with the people of Palestine to a higher level, by establishing diplomatic relations with Palestine following our independence. We remain sad, however, in the knowledge that these courageous people continue to live under bondage and occupation.

(Mr. Asheeke, Namibia)

It is not an oversimplification to state that it is high time for all of us to ensure that justice is done to the Palestinian people. It is often said that where there is a will there is a way. In keeping with that conventional wisdom, let us collectively and individually see to it that Palestine is fully restored, with its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity intact.

We must avoid the temptation to think that the plight of the Palestinians is habitual routine. The Palestinians are human beings like all of us. They deserve their freedom and recognition of their right to live in justice and peace in their sovereign and independent Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

All sensible people around the globe were shocked by the killing of more than 20 Palestinians in October and the attempts to justify such carnage. Such cold-blooded murder should not be tolerated by civilized mankind. Likewise, the continuing brutal oppression of the Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories should be stopped. In this connection, we urge those who wield power and influence to use these to stop practices that lend themselves to unfairness and selective justice.

At this time in history, when everybody is talking peace and accommodation, my delegation feels strongly that this positive wind of change should be utilized to the maximum to give the Palestinian people a chance. In this regard, we urge the Government of Israel to co-operate with the General Assembly and the Security Council and to work for a peaceful and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

While my Government recognizes the existence of the State of Israel, we do not accept that one State can exist only at the expense of another nation. History shows that war, hatred and occupation will never resolve the conflict in the Middle East; if anything, they serve only to heighten tension in the region.

(Mr. Asheeke, Namibia)

It is because of this conviction that my Government lends its full support to the holding of an international conference on the Middle East at which all the parties to the conflict, including in particular the Palestinian people, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), will fully participate in the search for a definitive and lasting solution.

The Government and people of the Republic of Namibia look forward to the day when the fraternal people of Palestine will join this family of nations as a full member. Let us all work harder together to attain that goal.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): Once again, at this session of the General Assembly, we are considering as a primary issue the question of Palestine. In joining in this debate, the Albanian delegation would like to reaffirm the resolute stand of the Government and people of Albania and their unreserved and full support for the lawful national rights of the long-suffering Palestinian people. Our delegation wishes to join its voice to that of the whole international community in an urgent demand for a serious strengthening of their resolve and commitment to collective efforts, within the framework of the United Nations and its organs, aimed at ensuring proper and effective assistance to the Palestinian people in their struggle to exercise freely their basic and inalienable right to their homeland and their undeniable right to self-determination and to life in freedom, as a sovereign nation. The tragedy that that people has lived through for so many decades must be brought to an end as soon as possible.

It has long been universally accepted that the solution of the Palestinian problem is at the core of and is the key to the settlement of the Middle East problems in their entirety and to the establishment of genuine and long-lasting peace and stability in that region. That being the case, the treatment and urgent solution of this problem should be given the required priority in the work of our Organization.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

It is true that the flagrant aggression by Iraq against Kuwait, a sovereign State and Member of the United Nations, and its annexation, which is an entirely unacceptable and condemnable act, has brought about threats and repercussions with unpredictable consequences for the peoples of the Middle East and for international peace and security. That aggression, which has been forcefully condemned by my country, has inflicted very great damage on the just cause of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and on the unity of their ranks in the face of the uninterrupted policy of aggression, occupation and annexation of their enemy, Israeli Zionism. It has caused extraordinary concern to the whole international community and unprecedented commitment by our Organization and many Member States.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has supported and will continue to support all the positive efforts that have been and will be undertaken within the framework of the United Nations towards the achievement of the just and early resolution of that explosive crisis and the avoidance by all possible means of an armed conflict, which could have catastrophic consequences. But, at the same time, that crisis should not be made an excuse to divert the attention of the world community from the indispensability of full commitment and concrete, effective action aimed at ensuring a solution to the problems of the Middle East, and, first and foremost, the problem of Palestine. In the final analysis, the complex conflicts and crises in the region, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Lebanese crisis and the latest crisis in the Persian Gulf region, are closely intertwined and are consequences of past and present harmful policies, practices and ambitions, which deserve consideration, and of the influence of regional and foreign factors.

The important developments over the past two years in the new process of dialogue and talks on the Palestinian issue, in which the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Arab League, the Secretary-General and the United States of

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

America were involved, prompted some promising signs of leading that dialogue towards the true process of bringing about a solution to the Palestinian problem in particular and the problems of the Middle East in general, and promoting a sound political and diplomatic climate that would facilitate the process. We had hoped to see and welcome further even more concrete, advanced steps, but the present reality, the further aggravation of the situation, the exacerbation of tension in the Middle East and, especially, the Israeli Zionists' unchanged policies of aggression and annexation and their intensification of violence, oppression and terror in the occupied territories do not allow us to express any kind of optimism with regard to the possibility of any new, genuine and positive steps being taken. On the contrary, these factors force us to express even greater disappointment and concern. This anti-Palestinian policy, this arrogant, intransigent and challenging attitude on the part of Israel, remains the principal factor blocking the way to any true process of dialogue aimed at the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem and maintaining the situation of tension and war in the area of the Middle East.

Those in the leading circles in Tel Aviv, making use of the interrupted talks between the PLO and the United States and, in particular, the situation created by the Persian Gulf crisis, have recently made their policies and practices even more rigid; they have intensified still further their criminal practices and acts against the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories, as well as their violence and terror throughout those territories. Further proof of these facts was that grave and shameful crime, the shedding of blood by the Israeli forces of occupation, which killed and wounded a large number of innocent Palestinians on Mount Temple in Arab Jerusalem. That new criminal act was right and resolutely condemned by the international public as a whole and by the Security Council.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

This blind policy and challenging stand of Tel Aviv, which are contrary not only to the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people and to peace and security in the area and throughout the world but also to the interests of the Israeli people themselves and to their prospects for a peaceful and secure life, are surely doomed to failure. Is it not, therefore, high time for people in Israel to reconsider seriously and give up their dream of Greater Israel and commit themselves to going along with the new positive currents of democratization in international relations and the solution of conflicts and disputes by peaceful means, through constructive and sincere dialogue and negotiations? This will certainly require the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories and the exercise of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in their homeland and to establish a free and independent State. Early realization of these imperatives will be the key to settlement of the conflict and of the Middle East problems. Such settlement is a fundamental condition of the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region and of genuine security and tranquillity for all the peoples and all the countries of the Middle East.

Through perseverance in their intifadah - that massive and resolute, but peaceful, revolt against occupation, violence and terror - the Palestinian people have once again demonstrated their unflinching determination to resist and to regain their national rights. This peaceful commitment of the Palestinians to recover and exercise their lawful right to self-determination, as well as the readiness shown by their legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, to commit itself to dialogue and to the path of negotiation to find a just solution to the Palestinian problem, is a clear expression of the good will and the intent of the Palestinians to achieve a peaceful solution. This approach has rightly been met with all possible support and encouragement from the international community and this Organization.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

The United Nations and the Security Council must embark as soon as possible on a series of effective measures to initiate a new and genuine process aimed at finding a just and lasting solution to the problem of Palestine. The convening and organizing by them of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all the parties directly concerned, including the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has become a general imperative and a demand not only of the Arab countries and peoples but of the whole international community.

It is time to send Israel the correct and final message that its challenge to the world community and its annexationist, anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab policies and activities, which seriously threaten peace and security in the Middle East and the world, can no longer be tolerated. The experience of the Security Council in dealing with the Gulf crisis following the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait is clear testimony to the Council's possibilities and capabilities when there is true commitment in keeping with its responsibilities and competence deriving from the United Nations Charter.

The Albanian people and their Government, will, as always, give full and resolute backing to efforts to ensure the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian and other brother Arab peoples. In conformity with this stand of principle, we have supported and will support without any reservation every proper effort aimed at truly assisting the Palestinian people to regain their national rights and at facilitating the solution of the Palestinian problem and Middle East problems in general.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The question of Palestine, which traditionally occupies a particular place in the General Assembly's agenda, is assuming extreme urgency in the light of the dramatic events taking place in the Palestinian lands occupied by Israel. The massacre of Palestinians on the Temple Mount on 8 October and the ensuing fresh round of spiralling violence and extremism are a direct outcome of the policy pursued by ruling circles in Israel of consolidating their occupation of Arab territories and trampling the national and religious feelings of the Palestinian people. The Soviet Union forcefully condemns this new wave of repression by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian civilian population and demands the immediate ending of punitive acts and lawlessness.

The international community cannot be indifferent to the fate of the Palestinian people. As was cogently borne out by last month's Security Council debate on the tense situation in the occupied territories, confrontation in this region has reached extreme proportions. There is a greater need than ever for dynamic steps to put an end to the escalation of violence and for a responsible approach on the part of all parties with a view to untying this Palestinian knot.

So far, unfortunately, there have been no tangible signs of any readiness on the part of Israel's Government to depart from its negative position, which is at variance with that of the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations. By rejecting Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), as well as previous resolutions of the Council and of the General Assembly that laid down the political and legal guidelines for a comprehensive Middle East settlement, and by refusing to accept the sensible and realistic proposals made by the Secretary-General, Israel is virtually placing itself at loggerheads with the entire international community.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

The recent discussion in the Special Political Committee demonstrated that the political, socio-economic and cultural discrimination against the Palestinians has not ceased and that the elementary rights of that people continue to be infringed and violated.

Israel's policy of forced settlement of usurped Arab lands is completely at variance with the decisions of the United Nations and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibit the settlement of non-indigenous populations in occupied territories. This Israeli policy offers little prospect of a just settlement of the problem.

As representatives know, recent attempts to resuscitate the political dialogue which became possible as a result of the constructive attitude of the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) have become deadlocked because of insufficient flexibility on the part of Israel. It seems - and this is borne out by the present increase in tension in the occupied territories - that Tel Aviv intends to continue to rely on resort to duress and military might.

The short-sightedness of such a policy is obvious. Surely in the course of the last three years even the Israeli authorities have become convinced that their attempts to put down the intifidah by force of arms have been counter-productive and, in the final analysis, have simply led to a further escalation of tension, not only in the occupied territories but in the region as a whole, and that this has frustrated any effort to reach a settlement of the Middle East conflict. We are convinced that the Government of Israel must finally see common sense and realize that the Palestinian revolt is not the cause of the deteriorating situation but, rather, a direct consequence of the repressive policies pursued by Tel Aviv; that it will be possible to break this deadlock only if a true balance is struck between the interests of all the peoples in the region and their freedom of choice is respected.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

The just solution of the Palestinian problem within the context of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East is one of the priority objectives of Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet Union has always believed that the United Nations, with its authority, its peacemaking capabilities and its expertise in Middle East affairs must play the leading role in establishing lasting peace in that region. We are convinced that only through an international conference, under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all the parties concerned, and including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the five permanent members of the Security Council, can a settlement be reached. Only in this way will it be possible to set up, as quickly and reliably as possible, a completely new kind of model for a peaceful existence for all the peoples living in the Middle East and for good-neighbourly co-operation between them.

This model must be founded on the commonly accepted norms of international law and civilized behaviour, a balance of the interests of all the parties and unconditional acceptance of the right of peoples to freedom of choice. It is important that there be a just territorial foundation for the settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); the Palestinian people are able to exercise the same right to self-determination, and to the same extent, as the Israeli people; that all parties to the conflict be guaranteed the right to a peaceful and secure existence within internationally recognized borders; and that the principles of equal rights, equal security, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for sovereignty and independence, and the non-use of force be strictly observed by all the parties.

The world community and the United Nations have been involved with the problem of reaching a Middle East settlement, settling the Arab-Israeli conflict and resolving the Palestinian question for a long time now and, unfortunately without

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

particular success so far. We were saying as much both here and elsewhere before the events of 2 August. Consultations were being held, different approaches were being studied and the possibility of setting up security structures in the region and establishing confidence-building measures were being discussed, with many other things. A wide-ranging dialogue on all these issues has been going on for a long time now within the context of Soviet-American meetings at various levels.

The Soviet Union is convinced that these efforts must continue. Ways must be sought to reach a comprehensive settlement to the whole complex of problems in the Middle East, which existed there before 2 August. We believe that Iraq's aggression against Kuwait has made the situation in the Middle East much more complicated, but that this simply means that we must redouble our efforts to ensure peace in the region and to solve the Palestinian problem.

The Soviet Union is prepared, in the interest of reaching a settlement, to develop further its contacts with all interested parties, including the Palestinians and the Arab States. We are prepared to engage in dialogue, in any form and at any level, with Israel. The approaches being made by the European States are interesting and, of course, consultations between Security Council members on the problems of a Middle Eastern settlement are of particular importance.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Shevardnadze, stated in the Security Council on 29 November this year;

> "Our clear and straightforward position on the Persian Gulf crisis enables us to work in that direction without being deterred by hints or accusations of somehow linking this crisis with the problem of an Arab-Israeli settlement." (S/PV.2963, p.94-95)

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

Mr. Shevardnadze said that he did not favour artificially holding up attempts to resolve a problem of long standing simply because a new one has arisen which must be dealt with.

Some fine and true words have been spoken at this rostrum in defence of the interests of the Palestinian people. The time has now come for specific, decisive action, in the interest of the quickest possible restoration of peace and justice in the lands of the Middle East and of guaranteeing the inalienable right to a secure and dignified existence of all the peoples living there, including the Palestinians.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): As I am speaking in the General Assembly for the first time at this session, Sir, I take pleasure in congratulating you on your election to the presidency and in wishing you every success.

We have dealt with the question of Palestine in past years, exposed the oppression inflicted on its people and brought to light the violations and the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Israeli authorities. We have touched on the legal norms that the Israeli authorities have continued to violate and the human rights that they have continued to trample. We have considered the problem, enumerated the errors on the basis of which the Zionist State in Palestine emerged, and followed up the fundamental contradictions with which Israel lives. We have referred to the Arab position and the sacrifices the Arabs have made in order to reach a peaceful solution that would secure stability for the region despite all these contradictions and despite all the obstacles Zionism can create.

The temerity of the Zionist leaders is such that a few years ago they denied that the Palestinians even existed. They said that the Palestinians did not exist, and Shamir himself, the Prime Minister of Istrael, had the audacity two years ago

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to compare the Palestinians to insects, implying that he would crush them as he would crush insects. What an expression, what a reflection of the evil soul of the man who said it!

We must also draw attention to Shamir's statement of over two weeks ago, in which he said, in effect, that it is the duty of his party to hold the land of Palestine from the sea to the river for future Israeli generations and to secure land for the new immigrants, as if the country were uninhabited, unpopulated, free for anyone that wants to grab it; as if there were no laws, traditions or morality; as if there were no United Nations - or disunited nations.

Today, now that the cold war has been abandoned and co-operative action in the international arena has begun, especially within the United Nations, we face a new fact on the international scene, a fact that will determine our future course, the future of regional and international relations, and will inform the destiny of our generations, regardless of whether Zionism accepts or rejects it.*

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* Mr. Flores Bermudez (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

There is a new and genuine spirit of co-operation between States and Powers whose rivalries in the past had divided the world into blocs and alliances and arenas of defiance and discordance for 45 long years. This constructive spirit carries within it new values, and in its veins runs a spontaneous respect for law and a spontaneous rejection of the law of the jungle. We coexist in this new era in a world that sees in the United Nations, its principles, and its commitments, an embodiment of its aspirations and a realization of its hopes. It sees in international legality an indispensable basis for the continued co-operation and the reaping of the fruits of this new world - a world in which Israel will see itself and its methods as alien to world morality and find itself outside the framework of world principles, rejected by the very rules of the world's code of behaviour.

Today, and for the past 36 months, a roaring revolution has enflamed the land of Palestine, a spirit of freedom, a spirit of martyrdom, a revolution of men, women, children and the elderly; a revolution that arises from the conscience of a people that had remained silent while being oppressed so that it was imagined that they had accepted oppression; it was even thought that they had knuckled under and accepted the bitter reality and that their problem was merely extraneous. Then, the Palestinian people rebelled. They made the very stones of the land, its trees, its groves, its water and its air rebel and resist. They did this with a rare sort of courage which, God willing, will defeat the oppressors no matter how vicious their machines of terror and war may be. The international conscience has been moved since the beginning of the revolution and has been on the side of those demanding their rights. It has condemned the terror of the Israeli authorities, and has exposed the Zionist fallacy in all its forms. But we see, regrettably, that Zionist propaganda and Zionist terrorism has succeeded, to a certain extent,

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in blacking out all that is being committed on the land of Palestine. The Zionists expelled the media from the scene of its operations and shut the doors in its face. Where are the weepers and the mourners for free expression, for the rights of peoples, for human rights, for international treaties and conventions, and for human norms? Where are they now in regard to what is taking place in Palestine? Or, we ask, is it permissible for Zionism and for Israel to do that which is forbidden the international community and all its members?

The rights of the Palestinian people are being violated now as they have been every single day in the past. All these crimes are being committed against the Palestinian people, against child and adult alike, against the youth and the elderly, and against the men and the women. There is no existing right on the face of the Earth, which is not being trampled under foot today by the Israeli gangs which terrorize the Palestinians on their land and in their homes.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, states:

> "the Committee wishes to urgently draw once again the most urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949. The Committee reiterates its most urgent appeal to the Security Council, to the High Contracting Parties to the fourth Geneva Convention and to all concerned to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and international protection of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a just settlement." (A/45/35, para. 29)

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

We must, and have no alternative but to support the demand for the protection of the Palestinians and to secure the mechanism that would ensure the application of the Geneva Convention of 1949, to which we referred earlier, because anything short of that will amount to a call for the people to respond to Zionist violence by the same methods used by their executioners.

We wonder, does there still exist in the twentieth century a scale for human rights which discriminates according to race, language, religion, and colour? Such a scale existed in the past. We were told that it had disappeared forever in the era of the United Nations and of human rights Covenants. Why then do some keep silent while Israel commits its violations and crimes?

The world media covered the beginning of the last tragedy 36 months ago. Then the news media was barred from what is taking place in Israel because it is Israel, and the Israelis thought that accountability before the conscience of the world had ceased even if the right to commit crimes had not. In fact, the violence actually increased, exactly as it did in South Africa when the media was barred from its fields of action. The excesses increased. They did not diminish. They increased in ugliness. They did not decrease. Their areas expanded. They did not shrink. The Zionist leaders' fear of world public opinion has evaporated since they thought it had become deaf and blind. The Zionists persisted, in the name of maintaining law and order, in committing all sorts of crimes until today. We hear some who say that their responsibilility is to maintain law and order. If such crimes constitute law and order, then how about the human rights which other States are exhorted to respect? Or is there a special scale for Israel, a country which some do not dare to touch? The Committee states in its report:

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"As at 31 August 1990, according the the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, the total number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the intifadah through direct responsibility of the Israeli forces, armed settlers, civilians and collaborators, was 856 identified cases. Of those, 704 had died from gunfire, 63 from beatings and other actions, and 89 in tear-gas related incidents. Another 104 Palestinians had died under suspicious circumstances ..."

"... The casualty toll among children was extremely high: 217 children under 16, or about 25 per cent of the total number of victims".

(ibid., paras. 22, 23)

Israel's resort to diverse cruel measures of mass punishment is a blatant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

However, the Palestinian people, in its determination to regain its rights, will establish its just scale by itself, and will tame the machinery of tyranny and terror. Zionist terrorism will only strengthen the Palestinian people's resolve to put an end to the terrorism of the institutions that practice such terrorism.

Three million Israelis want to change the course of history in a region that is inhabited by hundreds of millions of people whose land rejects the Israelis and whose sky curses them, and by God, they will never be able to fulfil their dreams. The Israelis have not learnt that security will not be theirs alone in the land of Palestine, and that the owners of the country are the only ones able to establish security on it for themselves and for the others. There is no security without them; and there is no security for the others at the expense of their own tranquility and safety.

The Arabs formulated the Fez plan to solve the problem of Palestine and the Middle East, despite the sacrifices it entails. Then the Palestinians made great concessions. The Israelis, however, did not understand that, and did not appreciate it. Rather, they were blind to the sacrifices made by the Arabs for the sake of a secure future for the region. They blinded themselves and have not been able to grasp the fundamental elements of the Palestinian problem itself.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People explains to us how the Zionists deny all the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, how they trample all the values they require other States to respect when it concerns them, how they commit all the crimes against the Arab human being, and how they feel immune from punishment, as if the punishment can only come from abroad. They lock their doors tightly on themselves in the face of the foreign media. Punishment will come to them at the hands of their victims,

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at the hands of men and women, of children, the young and the elderly, who are being subjected to the harshest kinds of torture and terror. Nobody should even ask the Palestinians, why do you avenge yourselves, while the world stands on the sidelines and watches the executioners inflicting on the Palestinians the worst sorts of torture.

Our thanks go to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Our thanks go to its Chairperson and to its members, with our deep appreciation for their efforts in reaching the truth and for their worthy courage in presenting this truth. We regret that some States stand and watch, and are content to make statements. We regret that some international institutions mourn the loss of human values in other countries and demand the imposition of sanctions, while in Palestine, the Palestinians are subjected to one of the ugliest machineries of terrorism and oppression ever known to man. What are we doing here now?

From this rostrum, we salute those who stand steadfastly in the land of Palestine; we salute those who confront with their chests the bullets and bombs of the Israeli authorities' terror and endure hunger, deprivation and oppression in their own land. We salute those who endure tyranny and every excess in the land of their fathers and forefathers. We salute those who stand up and rebel as heroes and die as martyrs. God says in the holy Quran:

> "Think not of those who are slain in God's way, as dead. Nay, they live. Finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord."
>
> (Sura III - Verse 169)

A word to the soldiers of the army recruited in Israel to kill women and children: the women and children will defeat you, with their belief in their rights; their men and their elderly will defeat you with their determination and their faith, God willing.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

These steadfast rebels against injustice are demanding their rights, which are recognized by you. Our silence, while the uprising in the land of Palestine confronts Israeli oppression and occupation, puts a heavy responsibility on us before God and history. We will stand here one day, if we do not act now, to regret that we did not uphold their rights, and that we did not prevent the worst.

I do not wish to conclude my statement without referring to the statement of the representative of Iraq concerning the presence of multinational forces in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region. It is a force we called upon to stand up to the Iraqi aggression which threatens the region. Kuwait was the first victim of that aggression. The victim was also the cause of Palestine, its people, its interests and its objectives.

It is a cause which is being abused by Iraq just as it exploits religion for its objectives, which are in full contradiction with religion and the cause of Palestine. When mentioning the sanctity of the holy sites, let us not forget that it is the Iraqi régime which is threatening the entire region. The acts of that régime are inimical to all Arab interests. The holy sites are in the safest hands. We will protect them from any aggressor, including the Iraqi régime or any other source of aggression.

If the Iraqi régime continues to justify its acts with religion, let me say that all their words and all their acts contradict religion and moral values. However, let him avoid invoking the holy sites which are well outside their intention and evil deeds. Let them not abuse those sites to justify their acts of aggression.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): Almost every speaker before me has reminded the Assembly that, of all the conflicts that threaten world peace and security, the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, stands out as the most serious and bloody that has remained unaffected by the relaxation of East-West tension and the consequent ending of the cold war. With the exception of the abominable policies of apartheid South Africa, few subjects have remained on the agenda of the General Assembly for such a long time.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

In my statement to the Assembly on 4 October 1990, I pointed out that the invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq had distracted attention from the Palestinian question. I further pointed out that, far from receiving the attention it deserves, the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories had unfortunately been relegated to the back burner by the new crisis in the region. This is most unfortunate because the Gulf crisis can only add to the suffering of the Palestinian people. The crisis is therefore an additional reason for reviving the Middle East peace process. The United Nations was a party to the creation of the problem. It has an inescapable responsibility to right the wrong done to the Palestinian people by helping to revive the search for a lasting solution to the Palestinian question. If the faith, trust and confidence of the Palestinian people in the United Nations and in the solidarity of the international community are to be sustained, we must do more than remaining merely seized of their plight: we must do something about it urgently.

During the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly the mood here was that the time was most opportune for reviving the search for a comprehensive solution to the conflict in the Middle East and specifically its root cause, the Palestinian question. In 1988 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) accepted Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Regrettably, instead of seizing this olive branch Israel has continued to refuse to deal with the PLO, and to veto its participation in any process for a comprehensive peace settlement of the conflict, using outdated arguments which have embarassed even its most ardent supporters. Only Israel regards the PLO as a terrorist organization and its acceptance of Security Council resolutions as insincere. Again, during the November 1988 meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers, Algeria, the PLO announced historic decisions that confirmed its readiness to accept the

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

existence of Israel and to engage in a peace process. This raised hopes that Israel would feel able to accept the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing and all the permanent members of the Security Council. Today the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East is as distant as ever. Such talk and half-hearted efforts as have been observed seem to seek to exclude the PLO from the talks. The fact that the status of the PLO as the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people has been enhanced rather than diminished by these courageous concessions has not persuaded the Israeli authorities to stop living in the past.

During the forty-fourth session my delegation noted with deep satisfaction the movement in the right direction by the United States of America, which has immense influence in the area. At long last it began talking to the Palestine Liberation Organization. But to our disappointment, the talking had hardly started when signs began to show that this positive policy development was threatening to abort. An alleged PLO attempt to enter Israel on terrorist missions provided the immediate reason for terminating the contacts. Unfortunately this type of treatment of the PLO has resulted in its flexibility being met with persistent Israeli intransigence. It has encouraged Israel to continue to refuse to negotiate with the PLO and to continue its attempt to find puppet Palestinians with whom to co-operate. This has not succeeded. Frustrated, Israel has continued to rain terror on the Palestinian people in a vain attempt to break their spirit and destroy the PLO.

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The Secretary-General observes in his report that

"It is clear ... that sufficient agreement does not exist, either within the Security Council or among the parties to the conflict, to permit the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in resolution 44/42". (A/45/709, para. 5)

This sad state of affairs reaffirms the need for the international community urgently to find a way out of this quagmire. My delegation therefore appeals to the five permanent members of the Security Council, which have demonstrated a unique resolve and unity of purpose in their response to the Gulf crisis, to respond in like manner to the Palestinian problem, initially by exerting pressure on Israel to match the good will and generosity shown by the PLO. Israel must be persuaded, and if necessary compelled, to accept an international peace conference convened under United Nations auspices. The permanent members of the Security Council, particularly those with influence over Israel, must make it clear to Israel that they are no longer prepared to allow it to continue to exercise a veto over the peace process in the Middle East.

Israel's intransigence has been accompanied by the unrestrained use of brute force. The report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories - contained in document A/45/576 of 19 October 1990 - provides, as in previous years, an up-to-date account of the increasing Israeli repression and denial of human rights. The situation continues to be tense. We foresee continued resistance to Israel's persistent policy of annexation and colonization, which has been pursued by successive Israeli Governments since 1967. Shootings, beatings, use of tear gas and various other means of repression directed

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at demonstrators, strikers or stone throwers have led to the killing of thousands and the wounding of tens of thousands. The heavy casualties of the repression among civilians, including infants and old people - all victims of indiscriminate use of violence - only compound the crime of occupation and annexation. The horrifying acts of brutality carried out by the Israeli authorities have also been directed at the economic and social infrastructure of the occupied territories - for example, the demolition of houses, the confiscation of land, the seizure of property, the disconnecting of telephone and power lines, the cuts in water supplies and even the uprooting of trees. It is difficult to associate these acts with a Government that claims to be civilized and democratic.

This horrifying human rights situation in the occupied territories is made even more disturbing by two other inhuman acts: Israel has continued to establish and expand settlements in the occupied territories as it continues to receive new immigrants from various parts of the world and, at the same time, it is deporting Palestinian women and children.

The human and financial cost of all these acts is too high to estimate. We salute the Palestinian people for their courage and determined resistance to Israeli oppression and repression. Armed with fists and stones, they continue to demonstrate to the world that no power on earth can suppress man's yearning for his dignity and humanity. Peoples' inalienable rights cannot be denied for ever.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is recognized by the General Assembly as the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people. Neither Israel nor its allies should be allowed to author their own framework of negotiation which

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

leaves out the PLO. We therefore welcome the conclusion in the Secretary-General's report that

> "a negotiating prccess will only be effective if it involves all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and aims at a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people". (A/45/709, para. 7)

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

The prolonged delay in the settlement of the Middle East problem poses a grave threat to peace and security in the region. The absence of any diplomatic process aimed at overcoming the obstacles to an effective negotiating process in the Middle East is, regrettably, due to the support and protection which Israel continues to enjoy from a permanent member of the Security Council.

It is the view of my delegation that the only way to move forward now is for the Security Council to convene an international conference on the Middle East to solve the problem once and for all. We sincerely believe that, in the light of the positive developments in the international political situation, the time has come for resumption of the Middle East peace process, focused on the Palestinian people's right to a homeland of their own.

On Thursday, 29 November 1990, the Security Council adopted a resolution meant to send the strongest signal to Iraq that the world is prepared to use force to liberate Kuwait. This decision reminds us that Arab lands and Palestine have been occupied by Israel for years and successive resolutions have never been supported by any force or threat of force. The time has come to deal with the Palestinian question with the seriousness it deserves. The world has a right to expect that those which in the past used their power of veto to protect Israel will now feel able to summon the necessary political will to tell Israel that their veto is no longer available to underwrite its intransigence. The world has a right to expect those nations to use their influence in the area to convince Israel that, for the good of the whole region, and for its own good, it must abandon its intransigence and respond to the persistent calls for an international conference on the Middle East.

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

Tanzania believes that the influence of the United States over Israel places it in a unique position to be even-handed in dealing the Palestine question. The United States has the undivided support of the international community, which has a duty to work with all the parties to the conflict for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement as set out in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988. The international community cannot afford to continue to dodge the problem; for, just as the world could not run away from the right of Jews to a homeland, so there is no way the world can run away from the responsibility of establishing a home for the Palestinian people.

The mood of the times offers us both a duty and a sense of urgency. Israel must join the wagon of transition from the age of conflict and rivalry to one of peace and co-operation. Even as we grapple with the invasion and annexation of Kuwait, let us lay the ground for the solution of this older and more urgent problem - that of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. If we are to reach a lasting solution to the explosive situation in the Middle East, I repeat, the Security Council must show the same resoluteness as it has shown in the case of the Iraq-Kuwait crisis.

The problem of Palestine cries out for an urgent solution. The world community has quite rightly refused to countenance a link between the brutal invasion and annexation of Kuwait and the long-festering problems of Palestine. Yet there is a very real danger that a link could be established. The accidents of history, geography and circumstances so combine as to make a link irresistible for some forces. If it allows the present paralysis to continue, the world community will fail in its efforts to prevent a link from being established. Those who stand to profit from a linkage must be praying for the status quo to continue. They must

(Mr. Nyakyi, United Republic of Tanzania)

be denied this satisfaction, and the best way to do that is to address the question of Palestine immediately. Israel must now be told by her friends, and especially those that have protected it with their veto, that enough is enough.

Tanzania will continue to lend full support to efforts towards the attainment of our noble objectives in the Middle East in general and in Palestine in particular.*

Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): Last year, when I addressed the Assembly from this rostrum on the situation in the Middle East, I said:

"Throughout the years the superimposition and overlapping of political, strategic, economic, social, cultural and religious factors have complicated a situation whose crux is the question of Palestine.

"Whatever approach we take in considering the problem, the legitimate claim of a people emerges irresistibly, irrepressively and totally. A just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be based only on the acknowledgement and effective exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Everything that has happened has resulted from the contempt shown over those rights". (A/44/PV.64, p. 48)

Everything began with the contempt shown for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people by those that gave away that which did not belong to them.

The bloody events of 8 October 1990 in Jerusalem, when a large number of Palestinian civilians were killed or wounded, also attest to the contempt of the Israeli occupying forces for the Palestinian people's legitimate claim to its

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

rights. The unanimous condemnation of those events by the Security Council clearly demonstrates the disapproval of the international community.

Israel is refusing to receive the Secretary-General's mission as called for in Security Council resolution 672 (1990). Israel refuses to recognize that the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, must be applied and observed in the occupied territories. Israel refuses to recognize the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. Respect for that principle would mean ending Israel's occupation since 1967 of Arab territories. Israel refuses to put an end to its illegal policy of annexation and of implantation of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, which makes any move towards peace in the region more difficult. Israel refuses to recognize the concessions which the Palestine National Council has made in its anxiety to make headway towards a negotiated settlement. After having attached reservations to its own proposals, Israel refuses to endorse the Baker plan.

Thus, nothing suits Israel, which never ceases to rail against the United Nations and its Members. According to Israel, only its own proposals should be given consideration. One can only deplore such unilateralism and rigid intransigence by Israel.

(Mr. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

One does not make progress towards peace by showing no consideration for the other side and being absolutely unwilling to achieve peace on conditions that would make it fair and lasting.

With regard to a region that continues to be the most explosive in the world, the Secretary-General has once again noted the need to make renewed efforts to bring about a just and lasting settlement of a conflict that has been for decades a constant source of instability and that has caused unspeakable suffering to both Arabs and Israelis.

Since the people of Israel has known the plight of a people without a homeland, we fail to see why it does not understand the Palestinian people.

Today we find ourselves faced with a situation in which, unfortunately, every initiative seems to have reached a dead end, especially since the multitude of interlinked approaches, situations and events in the region has become so tangled that we may justifiably feel pessimistic. However, the intensity of the continued intifadah reminds us that the Palestinian people expects justice to be done and that its struggle continues, despite the violence and repression perpetrated by the Israeli authorities. Palestinian civilians are ill-treated and abused by Israeli soldiers and Israeli settlers. For security reasons, the houses of Palestinians are destroyed and their families suffer from an unending list of practices.

Nevertheless, more than 150 States, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), believe that the question can be resolved on the basis of the three following points: first, withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories, including Jerusalem, occupied since June 1967; secondly, respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within

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secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and, thirdly, a satisfactory resolution of the Palestinian problem, based on recognition of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

As in the past, Burkina Faso unreservedly supports the Palestinian people's struggle, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to recover its legitimate national rights to a free and independent homeland.

Burkina Faso expects Israel to recognize the existence of a Palestinian people and to draw from that recognition the same consequences as the international community does.

My delegation would add that as long as a permanent and pre-eminent member of the Security Council continues to guarantee impunity of all kinds for Israel our debates here will remain hollow rhetoric that can be rejected, just as one brushes away a bothersome fly.

To be serious about peace in the Middle East one must tirelessly seek a settlement and try ceaselessly to bring all the parties to the negotiating table finally to make a start somewhere.

In that regard, to judge from the result of the vote on resolution 44/42, adopted on 6 December 1989, the proposal to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East is opposed by only three parties: Israel, the United States of America and Dominica. What is the message here? Are we to understand that all the other members of the international community are vehemently against Israel, that they refuse to admit that the problem is a matter of life or death for Israel and that they are all ready to be parties to Israel's elimination? To believe that would be unjust to the overwhelming majority of those that recognize Israel. Above all, it would be an insult to their judgement and an underestimation of their desire for peace and justice for all the States of the region.

(Mr. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

The dynamic for peace must be regained and positive initiatives must be taken to achieve a negotiated just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. We all know the fundamentals for such a solution; it remains to put them into effect with the co-operation of all.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the United Arab Emirates delegation to begin my statement by expressing my heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the other members of the Committee for their report (A/45/35 and Corr.1) to the Assembly, which is clear, positive and objective.

I should like also to extend to them all my country's appreciation of and gratitude for their continued efforts to perform the noble task entrusted to them and for their monitoring of the events and developments relative to the Palestinian question.

Over the past two years, the world has witnessed a fundamental change in its political and ideological map. This has been reflected in the ending of the cold war and the work done towards disarmament and arms control. There have been other positive international developments, reflected in the political map of the world and many areas of dispute all over the world.

There have also been basic, systematic changes in many countries and regions, especially in the area of their foreign relations. Some of those changes have been due to a self-generated momentum and others have been the result of external factors. However, nothing of the sort has happened in the case of Israel. Some countries have freed themselves of their dogmatic ideologies and adopted an open-door policy, with equality for all. At the same time, Israel has become increasingly intransigent in its policies. It refuses to recognize the national

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

rights of the Palestinian people. Its leaders go so far as completely to deny the existence of the Palestinians and it seeks to annex the remaining Palestinian territories.

While some of the countries to which I have referred have begun to allow exiled citizens to return, Israel rejects the right of return of the Palestinians. It even expels many of them while it brings in tens of thousands of Soviet Jews to settle in the Palestinian and Arab territories.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

Some countries have returned confiscated land and possessions to their rightful owners. Israel does the opposite. It expropriates more and more of the Palestinians' property with every passing day. Some countries have realized that the policy of power and military confrontation is doomed and will never yield results. Therefore, such countries have replaced that obsolete policy with the policy of dialogue. Israel persists in its policy of oppression and persecution of the Palestinians.

While the policy of détente between the two super-Powers has led to the settlement of some regional disputes, it is is regrettable that that policy so far has not led to a settlement of the question of Palestine. While the policy of détente has led to unanimity among the five permanent members of the Security Council and to the adoption of policies for the settlement of many pending disputes and questions, there has been no unanimity so far among the five permanent members on the Palestinian question.

The stalemate in the Palestinian question is due to two main factors: first, the persistence of Israel in its racist outlook, and, secondly, the hesitation of some countries to recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people. As for the first factor, the injustice done to the Palestinian people and its future is the result of an expansionist, racist theory, namely Zionism, and its embodiment Israel. Israel does not stop in pursuing its policies and practices at the denial of these rights but it resorts to the expulsion of the Palestinians from their land and to subjecting those who remain to all sorts of persecution. As for the other factor, some influential countries regrettably still deny the Palestinian people its right to be equal to other peoples and thus they do not recognize its right to freedom and independence. That position runs counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

We are fully confident that the Palestinian people will achieve all its rights to freedom and independence like all other peoples of the world. Proof of this is the determination of that people to continue its struggle regardless of the price it pays in trying to bring to an end the occupation and to regain its national rights.

The Palestinian struggle has taken various forms, the latest of which was the uprising. This intifadah will enter its fourth year in a few days and despite what was said at the start of the intifadah by the enemies of freedom and liberation that it would be short-lived and would fizzle out and die, it has proved over days and months that its flames grow ever stronger, its circumference grows ever wider and those who are engaged in its struggle are not from one age group of the Palestinian people but from every age and from both sexes: men, women, children and youth. It has proved also that it embraces geographically all the cities and villages of occupied Palestine. Moreover, the intifadah has shown a marked qualitative development in the practices with which it expresses the Palestinian people's rejection of the occupation.

The inevitable conclusion reached by any reasonable man is that Israel does not want peace and does not want a settlement of the Palestinian question except in line with its own wishes, and that that means a continuation of the occupation and annexation of the land of Palestine in order to realize the dream of a "greater Israel". That is why the best way out is to move towards the convening of the international conference called for by the General Assembly and to bringing all pressures to bear on Israel including the application of Chapter VII of the Charter, thus forcing it to accept the approach adopted by the international Organization for the settlement of this question.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.